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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 001188

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/21/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [KCRM](#)

SUBJECT: IRELAND RESPONSE TO IRISH/COLOMBIA THREE

REF: A. STATE 164051

[1B.](#) BOGOTA 8816

Classified By: DCM Jonathan S. Benton, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[11.](#) (C) Embassy Dublin has discussed the Irish/Colombia Three (ref A) with senior GOI officials on numerous occasions, including with Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern on September 12 and Justice Minister Michael McDowell on September 10. McDowell told the Ambassador that the GOI is investigating all its options, including whether new charges can be brought against the Three. McDowell said that obstacles to extradition are legal, not political. In a September 23 meeting with the Ambassador, Ministry of Justice Secretary General Sean Aylward said that Irish authorities

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had received the extradition request from Colombia (ref B). Noting that it was still in poor shape as an Irish legal document, he said the Ministry would "work on it." Aylward thanked us for U.S. help facilitating the September 7 visit to Colombia of Garda officials. He said the Irish government would seek to get information (such as Niall Connolly's false passport, reportedly in the Colombians' possession) to help make a case against one or more of the three in Ireland. Aylward said the meetings in New York between the Taoiseach and FM Ahern and the Colombian President and others "went well."

[12.](#) (C) Comment: The GOI was deeply embarrassed at the return of the Irish Three. Their interest in finding a legal mechanism to deal with them is sincere, whether through new charges, extradition or having them serve their sentences in Ireland. Of these three options, new charges for false use of an Irish passport would be most likely, depending on whether the Garda can produce evidence that would satisfy a prosecutor. Post will continue to engage GOI officials. End Comment.

KENNY